



Howard County Council

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District 1
Mary Kay Sigaty, Vice Chairman
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Calvin Ball, Council Member
District 2
Greg Fox, Council Member
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Jennifer Terrasa, Council Member
District 3

Council Member Courtney Watson's Third Year Report to Citizens - December, 2009

Dear Citizen:

As my third year as your County Council representative draws to a close, I continue to strive to make progress on local issues that improve your quality of life. Some of the 2009 accomplishments are highlighted below:

Public Facilities and Amenities

- Troy Hill Park - Funding provided to begin planning 106-acre recreational park in three phases with first phase to be completed in 2011. Park is located off Rt. 1 near Rt. 100.
- Miller Library and Historical Center - Funding provided to begin construction of a replacement library for the current Miller branch on Frederick Road. Completion 2011.
- Elkridge Library and Senior Center - Working with the county to plan and fund a replacement and/or expansion for the Elkridge Library and Senior Center.
- Mt. Hebron High School - Funding for addition and renovation which is in progress.
- Elkridge Elementary School – Addition completed for start of 2009 school year.
- Northfield Elementary School - Funding for a 6-phase improvement project. First phase under construction now with completion of all phases by Summer 2011.

Land Use

- Rt. 40 Improvements - A streetscape improvement plan is underway and a Rt. 40 Advisory Committee is working on development of the Rt. 40 Design Manual. The manual will guide the design of new projects along this corridor and is scheduled to be adopted in Spring 2010.
- Introduced legislation (Council Bill 8-2009) to allow landowners the option of delaying development projects in order to help to prevent half-finished developments in our neighborhoods during the recession.
- Defeated an attempt to change the rules to allow persons under age 55 to move into age-restricted housing as this housing was originally approved based on its ability to not generate additional enrollment in our schools.

Public Safety

- 22 new police officers were hired in 2009. Worked closely with residents to direct police attention to neighborhood concerns in both Ellicott City and Elkridge.
- Facilitated contact with Police Department to offer Collision Avoidance Training for teen drivers; Howard is first county in state of Maryland to offer this safety program taught by police officers.
- Worked with Ellicott City community to convince State Highway Administration to install a traffic signal at New Cut Road and Brampton Parkway along MD-103. Traffic signal scheduled to be installed in Spring 2010.

- Worked with Ellicott City residents to convince State Highway Administration to install a traffic light at Rt. 29N onto Rt. 70W.
- Supporting the community in the need for increased safety at Centennial High School through a redesign of school entrances and addition of a traffic light.

Community Service and Business Support

- Work daily with constituents to resolve problems in the areas of zoning, public works, public safety, recreation and parks, housing, utility problems, and cable complaints.
- Worked with Elkridge Food Pantry and the Howard County Library to facilitate the placement of a food donation bin at the Elkridge library as well as to form a partnership with a local food distributor.
- Worked with citizens in Font Hill to resolve a dispute regarding a large garage built outside of zoning regulations.
- Co-sponsored legislation to establish a “Designated Neighborhood” around Main Street, Ellicott City to allow local businesses to qualify for state business development programs.

Budget and Taxes

- Introduced and passed a bill to allow Police Officers, Firefighters and Corrections Officers a property tax credit if permanently and totally disabled in the line of duty.
- Identified 1.7 million dollars misapplied to a capital project in FY10 budget and facilitated the correction of the mistake.
- No new taxes.
- Assisted in the identification of overuse of take-home vehicles and supported the change in policy to account for and reduce the personal use of county vehicles.

As always, I appreciate the opportunity to serve you and I welcome your feedback.

Many families in our community are feeling the effects of the downturn in the national economy. I offer my assistance in any way possible. Please feel free to contact my office at anytime and speak to me, or my assistant Terry Chaconas.

Best wishes to you and your family as we celebrate the holidays and begin a new year.

Sincerely,

Courtney Watson

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